

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

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 IN THE MATTER OF THE: :
 :
 MAJOR MARINE ACCIDENT -- :
 COLLISION OF THE JAPANESE :
 FISHERIES TRAINING VESSEL :
 EHIME MARU AND THE U.S. NAVY :
 NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE USS :
 GREENVILLE (DCA01MM022) :
 NTSB PROJECT ID NO. 51701 :
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Monday,
 February 22, 2001

Interview of MASAO MURAI

NTSB REPRESENTATIVES

TOM ROTH-ROFFY
 Investigator in Charge

TED WHITE

ROB HENRY

U.S. COAST GUARD REPRESENTATIVES

LTJG ERIN CANTWELL

LTJG KEN KUSANO
 Interpreter

U.S. NAVY REPRESENTATIVE

CDR CACCIVIO

Also Present

MS. SACHIKO ARAI
 Office of Counsel General of Japan

Also Present were Representatives of the
 School and the Counsel's Office

EXECUTIVE COURT REPORTERS, INC.
(301) 565-0064

P R O C E E D I N G S

10:15 a.m.

MR. ROTH-ROFFY: We're now starting the last interview at 10:15, interviewing the Seaman Murai.

If you would, tell him we're from the Safety Board and please go through that, if you would.

Ask him, if you would, to describe from when he first knew something was wrong till he got into the life rafts.

INTERPRETER: He was on the bridge, about mid-ship, about mid-ship on the bridge. As he felt the first jolt, he went -- he went to the Port 30 wing and looked. That's when he looked aft. That's when he saw the -- the superstructure, the house, of the submarine.

Well, when he looked aft, he saw the submarine and then looked forward, and he recalls from the fuel vent, this -- this fuel spewing out.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, it was coming from the fuel vent.

INTERPRETER: Yeah. The port side forward.

So, he looked forward. He saw, and then he felt the second impact, the jolting, and then that's when he looked back and that's when he saw the fin, he saw the fin already out of the water.

1 So, he came back, and he came back to -- to
2 release the -- activate the (inaudible). At the first
3 impact, he saw a signal -- a signal -- a signal, and he
4 activated the (inaudible).

5 So, -- so, he -- so, he -- the second -- by
6 the second -- second impact, he -- he didn't -- he --
7 he really didn't know what kind of radio it was, but he
8 just remembered -- he just recalls seeing the captain
9 trying to speak into the microphone, but then he
10 noticed the power was out, and he wasn't really doing
11 anything with the microphone.

12 So, that's when he realized -- he noticed
13 that there's no power. So, -- and this is wrong. So,
14 he -- that's when he realized that something was really
15 wrong. He went back aft and went down the stairwell,
16 came down, went to the center line way, came back down
17 the starboard side, and that's when he saw a lot of --
18 a lot of personnel there, and that's when he told them
19 it was -- it's a sub -- it's a submarine and go off, go
20 off.

21 So, he told everyone to go off, and he went
22 back aft. So, he went back to look for people, and he
23 -- that's when he -- he didn't think there was anybody
24 else left, and that's when he saw two -- maybe three-

1 four people. So, by that time, he looked, and when he
2 looked down, the water was already up to his knees.

3 So, that's when -- that's when he said this
4 is definitely bad, and he doesn't recall if it was his
5 crew members or students, but he said, "Hey, we need to
6 go up the ladder, and we need to go to" -- so, he knew
7 that that was the -- the life rafts were right there.
8 So, that's -- that's the mustering area.

9 So, by the time when he got back, he got over
10 here, the vessel was already starting to sink. By that
11 time, the water was already -- it was -- it was already
12 sinking. So, it was already up to the approximate
13 location of the stack and the 02 -- 02 -- 01 deck.

14 So, as -- as water was coming up, one wave
15 came, and that's when I got washed away. So, that's
16 when he was washed away. He just grabbed on to the --
17 the first life raft he saw. It took about five minutes
18 to swim to the first boat that he saw.

19 So, that's when -- as soon as he got on the
20 life raft, he saw the submarine just making a turn.
21 From the time the boat sank, maybe an hour or so it
22 took before the first rescue, approximately an hour,
23 approximately an hour before the first rescue came.

24 INTERVIEWER: Did he have a life jacket on?

1 INTERPRETER: No, he didn't. He had it in --
2 he had it in his arm. Okay. So, he had the whole --
3 he -- the whole time, he didn't have time to put it on,
4 but he had it with him until he came -- he went into
5 the life raft.

6 INTERVIEWER: So, even after he was washed
7 off, he still had it?

8 INTERPRETER: Without -- without -- without
9 letting go, he -- he held on to it.

10 INTERVIEWER: Did it inflate on him?

11 INTERPRETER: It was inflated. It was
12 inflated.

13 INTERVIEWER: Did it inflate in the water?

14 INTERPRETER: So, the -- so, the one he had,
15 it was -- it was in a plastic bag, and he grabbed -- he
16 grabbed everything with a plastic bag, and it was still
17 in the plastic bag. So, that's the best -- when he had
18 it, it was still in the bag -- in the bag.

19 INTERVIEWER: Okay. When he -- he said he
20 saw the radio officer? Did he -- when he saw him, did
21 he have a life jacket on?

22 INTERPRETER: He had one.

23 INTERVIEWER: All right. Where -- where did
24 he obtain his?

1 INTERPRETER: He saw him by the stairs
2 outside. The last place he saw him was the aft of the
3 bridge house on the 0 -- 01 level, right next to the
4 stairs.

5 INTERVIEWER: Basically outside?

6 INTERPRETER: Outside.

7 INTERVIEWER: He was not on the wing?

8 INTERPRETER: Yeah. On the starboard side
9 right next to the stairwell.

10 INTERVIEWER: Was he staying there? Was he
11 going anywhere?

12 INTERPRETER: He said, "Look". Probably was
13 trying to get off.

14 INTERVIEWER: He wasn't trying to go down?

15 INTERPRETER: By that time, he said the wave
16 was already, you know, hitting his boat.

17 INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, this was -- so, he
18 saw Mr. Sigawa after he went down below and came back
19 up again?

20 INTERPRETER: So, when he -- when he first --
21 when he saw -- when he saw him, before he went down the
22 stairwell, he was on the starboard side of the bridge
23 -- the bridge wing, and when he came back up, that's --
24 that's the last time he saw him.

1 INTERVIEWER: So, he didn't see him when he
2 came back up?

3 INTERPRETER: No. He did. He did see him
4 when he came back up.

5 INTERVIEWER: When he came back up, he saw
6 him?

7 INTERPRETER: He saw him again. Oh, to -- to
8 notify them. He went down -- he went down and notified
9 people. He went down and notified people to go -- to
10 go -- go off.

11 INTERVIEWER: Did the captain send him down
12 or was that his own -- his own initiative?

13 INTERPRETER: Yeah, yeah.

14 INTERVIEWER: It was his own initiative?

15 INTERPRETER: His own initiative. So, on his
16 -- on his own -- well, he saw the captain. At that
17 time, he said, "Do you realize something is really,
18 really wrong?" So, he doesn't recall if the captain
19 told him, but he -- he feels on his own initiative, he
20 went down to warn the others. It was a submarine, and
21 go up, to go up.

22 INTERVIEWER: Was there any reason he would
23 not -- the port side -- the port way near the bridge.
24 I think he said he went up the port wing, saw the

1 submarine. What was the reason he went to the port
2 wing?

3 INTERPRETER: Well, because -- because the
4 vessel leaned towards the port side, and he just
5 basically just looked back from the -- from the
6 leaning.

7 INTERVIEWER: One personal question. What is
8 your age, sir?

9 INTERPRETER: 52.

10 INTERVIEWER: 52. I think that's -- I think
11 that's all. That's all we need.

12 Thank you very much.

13 INTERPRETER: Thank you.

14 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: The interview was concluded
15 at 10:35.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded at
17 10:35 a.m.)

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